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CHUCK HAGEL LINDSEY GRAHAM
Former Vietnam grunt beat back Graham's handlers.

Comic Moments Surround Hagel Affair

• Senate approves former Sen. Chuck Hagel for secretary of defense by vote of 58-41

By Michael Collins Piper

The unsuccessful campaign to block Chuck Hagel's nomination to the Defense Department was a classic "tragicomedy." Although loudly denying its own existence, the power groups Hagel once quite correctly referred to as "the Jewish lobby" engaged in a brazen public display of their venom in their effort to crucify Hagel.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith accused Hagel of having engaged in rhetoric that "borders on anti-Semitism" and then did a two-step, first saying the ADL would not oppose Hagel and then (when there were still hopes Hagel's appointment could be shelved) saying it might be necessary to put his nomination on hold.

Conscious of public recognition that opposition to Hagel was Jewish lobby-based, the top Jewish Democrat in the Senate — Chuck Schumer (N.Y.) — voiced support for Hagel, despite having privately expressed his opposition, and allowed Republicans to lead the charge against Hagel. This strategy was designed to make it appear as though opposition to Hagel was "partisan" in nature, an attempt to shift focus away from the Jewish lobby.

Hagel's critics used every means possible to try to portray Hagel's opposition as broadbased. At one point, they cooked up an outfit they portrayed as a "gay rights group" opposed to Hagel. In fact, this group turned out to be linked to the Emergency Committee for Israel, controlled by neoconservative strategist William Kristol.

On Capitol Hill, the Jewish lobby deployed their frontline Republican assets — Sens. John McCain (Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and newly appointed Tim Scott (S.C.) — to front for their campaign against Hagel.

The congressional grilling of Hagel was so outrageous even NBC's comedy weekly, "Saturday Night Live" (SNL), produced a skit making fun of the GOP senators for their obsequious pro-Israel rhetoric. Although never broadcast, the skit was posted on the Internet and generated widespread amusement, upsetting the ADL, which suggested the skit might be "anti-Semitic." (And this was not the first time, by the way, that SNL's creative genius, Lorne Michaels — who is Jewish — ran afoul of the ADL.)

Meanwhile, the anti-Hagel barrage started to fall apart, like something out of the Keystone Cops.

After one journalist satirically asked a Republican Senate staffer whether Hagel was connected to "Friends of Hamas," the staffer (missing the sarcasm) passed word on to a leading pro-Israel website, Breitbart.com, which leaked the claim Hagel might be bankrolled by terrorists. Friends of Israel spread the rumor, but, needless to say, the story had no basis in fact.

The good news is that President Obama nominated Hagel in the first place, knowing Hagel's record, deemed hostile to Israel, would inflame Israel's supporters. Obama seemed to be openly daring them to oppose Hagel, who was popular among veterans, high-ranking military figures and within the diplomatic and intelligence communities.

In the past, someone with Hagel's record would never even be considered for a high position. Now he is secretary of defense.

Michael Collins Piper is the author of ***Final Judgment***, the controversial "underground bestseller" documenting the collaboration of Israeli intelligence in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. He is also the author of ***The New Babylon***, ***The High Priests of War***, ***The New Jerusalem: Zionist Power in America*** , ***The Judas Goats: The Enemy Within***, ***Dirty Secrets: Crime, Conspiracy & Cover-Up in the 20th Century***, ***The GOLEM: Israel's Hell Bomb***, and ***Target: Traficant.*** These works can be found at America First Books and First Amendment Books: 1-888-699-NEWS. He has lectured on suppressed topics in places as diverse as Malaysia, Japan, Canada, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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